

# Mortal Implications

by Rahar Moonfire

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Summary: Magnus is caught off guard by a pair of gorgeous blue eyes that by all rights should not see him. It was rare for Mundanes to have the Sight these days. Perhaps this little college community just north of Central Park deserved his attention. Specifically, the boy with the lovely blue eyes. If only he can keep the owner of those eyes alive long enough to notice him again.

## 1. Remove the Safety

**\*\*A/N:\*\*** I am an idiot for starting yet another fic...

**\*\*Chapter summary:\*\*** In which Alec and Izzy arrive at the Institute, shots are fired, and a warlock is interested.

**\*\*Possible Trigger Warning:\*\*** There is a school shooting scenario in this first chapter. Just FYI.

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><p><strong>Mortal Implications<strong>

\* \* \*

><p><strong>1: Remove the Safety<strong>

They deserved it. She never regretted it. The flames dancing around the house after the lightning strike were forever imprinted on her mind. She clung to her brother, her arms tightening around his neck. Her backpack filled with possessions hung heavy on her back making her slip from his grasp. He shifted her back up his waist and closer to him, turning her face away from the destruction so she couldn't watch the flames dance.

Then her brother turned and ran, putting the blazing inferno behind

them. She lifted her head and could see the flames over his shoulder, feel the heat, and watch the lightning dance in the sky far above.

They deserved it.

The second bang was louder than the first. The third startled her awake.

She immediately lifted her head and looked around her. It was storming heavily outside. The bangs she'd heard had been the claps of thunder that rattled the old truck. She lifted her head from the bed to see her brother staring out the rear window of the truck. It was still dark outside even with the storm raging.

Lightning illuminated the cabin through the curtains blocking the windows on all sides of the hard shell canopy of the truck bed where they lived. It took a few seconds for the thunder to follow. The rain was falling hard on the roof above them creating an almost constant rumble that they had both learned how to ignore.

"What time is it?" she asked, sitting up just enough for her head and shoulders to poke out from the sleeping bag in the pile of blankets and pillows.

"Almost 5:45," her brother replied, glancing back at her. "I wasn't going to wake you for another hour or so."

"I'm fine," she mumbled, sitting all the way up and scooting down to the far end of the bed so she could sit beside her brother and watch the storm. "Get back in here," she ordered, tugging on her brother's loose shirt. "It's cold."

A smile tugged at his lips as he pushed his pale feet back into the sleeping bag. It had been his idea to try zipping together two separate sleeping bags into one big bag to help hold in the heat. Thankfully, the bigger combined bag was just roomy enough to comfortably fit the two siblings as long as neither rolled around too much. Her brother scooted down until he was completely covered up to his neck then his sister leaned against his shoulder.

His messy black hair tickled her cheek even though it was cut just above his ear. She blew the few taunting strands out of her face and closed her eyes. She smiled when she felt her brother loop an arm around her shoulder and pull her closer. Alec loved storms, but he loved heat more than cold. Izzy and the sleeping bag were warm and they still had an hour or so left to sleep.

Unfortunately, six-thirty came too quickly for either of them and to make matters worse it was still raining outside. At least it was no longer storming. Either way, it would make Izzy's first day at her new school a bit rough.

"Want me to drop you off?" Alec offered, pulling on a somewhat fresh pair of jeans.

Izzy pushed the curtain back from the window on her side of the cabin and glanced out. "If traffic's not too bad, that'd be great," she said. "Hey Alec," she called, waiting for him to pause and look up at her, "thanks."

Alec nodded mutely and began pulling on his shoes.

Half an hour later, the old Ford's engine rumbled to life and they were on their way to the New York Institute of Art and Technology. Traffic wasn't too bad yet, relatively speaking, but it got slightly heavier the closer they got to downtown New York City. The pouring down rain didn't help anything.

Alec pulled into the huge commuter parking lot that stretched from the steel and glass bookstore down to the right along the Campus Loop Road which, as its name suggested, looped the college campus and adjacent green space in the middle of the city. Directly across the Loop from the bookstore was a grand, elegant building made of reddish brick and white accents. It looked like a refurbished cathedral nestled in the middle of a green field surrounded by trees, parking lots, and the never sleeping city of New York. It felt like an entirely different world than what either sibling was used to.

The commuter parking lot was large but nowhere near big enough to accommodate the college's growing commuter traffic. Thankfully, there were ten metered parking spots directly by the bookstore for guests, three of which were empty. Alec pulled into the first empty spot and turned off the engine.

"Nice choice," Izzy said, gathering her backpack and umbrella as Alec drove up to the curb in the parking spot.

Alec pulled his messenger bag over his shoulder and grabbed old black biker jacket out from the space behind his seat and put it on, flipping the collar up around his ears to help keep them dry. Then he took the umbrella from Izzy's hand and opened the door to climb out of the truck. He locked the driver side door by hand and clipped the keys to his belt loop before fumbling through his pockets for some loose change. A quarter and a dime bought him twenty minutes from the meter.

He hiked his bag up, tucking it under his coat and hurried back to the passenger side door, opening it and holding the umbrella out so Izzy didn't get too wet. When she was out and settled, he closed and locked the truck door and walked up the sidewalk to the bookstore, passing the connected bagel shop without a glance.

The sidewalk widened into a patio area for the bagel shop customers to sit and relax under the shade of a huge, ancient oak tree by the street. The sidewalk narrowed further to the right along the front of the bookstore facing the Loop to accommodate a spacious bike rack that was currently empty. No one else except for a handful of people driving to their early classes or work were awake at this hour.

Alec paused under the small overhang from the community tower and turned to his sister. "I'll be in the library later on," Alec said. "I need to put up the flyers and maybe print a few more out from the library if it's free."

"I can do that," Izzy said.

"You have class," Alec said, shaking his head.

"Just in the morning."

"And you need to keep your grades up if you plan on keeping your scholarship and staying in college," Alec countered sternly. "We can't afford to pay for this otherwise."

Izzy's shoulders drooped in disappointment. "Alright," she sighed taking the umbrella Alec handed her. "See you later," she said, stepping out into the rain.

"Izzy!"

She paused and turned around to see her brother's blue eyes watching her. "Good luck," he said with a soft smile.

She smiled. "Thanks," she said. "You too."

Alec watched her make her way to the glass and steel building across the street from the bookstore in silence. She'd been forced to grow up too fast over the last five years. Granted it had taken a while to figure everything out along the way but it had all worked out well in the end. Even then Alec had known this day would come, but that didn't mean he was ready for it.

He had hoped he could avoid this place for another year or so. But if there was one thing he was incapable of doing, it was refusing his sister when she gave him that pathetic look. When she'd asked him if she could go to college, he had been proud and disappointed. He was still bothered by the juxtaposition of those emotions. He wanted his sister to succeed, but he couldn't afford the nicer, bigger colleges. Plus, it had been too late in the year to bother sending in applications to more than a small handful of local community colleges that were still accepting applications.

Of those, the Institute had responded with an acceptance letter the quickest. Since it was in their home state and Izzy had maintained high grades throughout her atypical high school education, it qualified her to receive the state's Furthering Education for Prospective Students or FEPS scholarship and grant. So long as the student receiving the scholarship maintained at least a 3.5 GPA, they would receive a full ride to any in-state college they chose to attend for four years or until a bachelor's degree was achieved, whichever came first. It did not include the coverage for textbooks, but with the tuition and fees covered, that made the textbook prices slightly less intimidating. Alec firmly believed his sister was capable of pulling that off. She was smart and clever. It was a pity she had to learn that the hard way.

Dismissing his more morose thoughts, Alec pulled out a couple flyers from his slightly damp messenger bag and turned to the campus community tower behind him. The community tower was just one of many columns rising about eight or so feet from the sidewalk around the campus where anyone could pin flyers, advertisements for local businesses, music performances, and even club meetings.

Alec moved to pin one of his flyers offering his services as a tutor on the tower when an unexpected voice startled him.

"You shouldn't worry."

Blue eyes automatically sought the voice's owner and found him

sitting comfortably at one of the three picnic tables outside the bookstore despite the pouring rain. His skin was darker than Alec's and he wore an elegant silk shirt and black leather pants that hugged his legs flatteringly. His shirt was a glistening ebony that matched his pants perfectly. He struck a very distinctive figure. How Alec missed the man's presence a second ago was beyond him. That aside, why was this stranger talking to him in the first place?

"She is strong," the man continued, "and independent. She will spread her wings soon enough."

"Mind your own business, old man," Alec griped with a cold glare.

The man's attention whipped to Alec abruptly, his soft brown eyes narrowing in what could have been surprise. He said nothing else but the faintest hint of a smile made his lips twitch upwards at the corners. "Whatever you say," the man replied easily.

Alec rolled his eyes. He had no desire to get sick standing out here berating a stranger for staring at his sister. If he got sick then Izzy could get sick and that was unacceptable. Not to mention the fact he could not afford a visit to the doctor. That was simply too expensive. Besides, he had more important things to worry about right now.

He made his way over to the bookstore fifteen feet away. He had to buy a handful of notebooks, mechanical pencils, and Izzy's textbooks. It took slightly less than twenty minutes to buy the supplies thanks to his early arrival. When he walked out of the bookstore, the parking lot was more full than it had been earlier. He walked quickly back to his truck, pulled out of the parking lot, and waited to turn left back towards the Campus Loop. He would drive around to find a suitable place nearby to park relatively long term without too much trouble.

The light turned green and Alec was just about to go when the man who had been sitting at the table in the rain calmly stepped into the crosswalk and strolled directly in front of Alec's truck. Alec slammed on the breaks to keep from hitting the idiotic man and was immediately honked at by the car behind him. He glanced at his side mirror to glare indirectly at the obnoxious driver. But when he looked back up to the crosswalk, the man was gone.

Alec huffed in frustration and drove onto the Loop completely dismissing the man. All he needed now was coffee, gasoline, some groceries from the local convenience store, and a place to park for the day until he could find a safe place to park on a more permanent basis without having to buy an expensive campus parking pass. He sincerely hoped he did not have to do the latter. He wasn't sure his already thin wallet could take that strain.

Izzy took a seat in her classroom and immediately felt out of place. She had somehow managed to get turned around twice in this campus. The campus wasn't huge but it wasn't small either. Its layout was organic, growing with the need for more room. The addition of the Greek community a decade ago had given the small Institute a much needed student boom. But that also brought more people and the parking lots and dorms were feeling the strain. The number of college aged students had climbed over the years since Izzy and her brother

had been here last.

Alec had homeschooled Izzy for the years since yanking her out of their former life. School on the road had been rough but fun. They took turns driving and studying, stopping at libraries and coffee shops any chance they got to access and submit online homework. Data was too expensive to use unless absolutely necessary.

This whole actual classroom with lots of people and ridiculously tiny desks was uncomfortable but new and an interesting change. The chairs were definitely uncomfortable though. There was no leg room and the desk was connected to the chair so there was no chance of adjusting the distance. Watery sunlight rippled through the windows along the far wall where Izzy wanted to sit but couldn't because the students who had arrived before her had stolen those spots. At least some of the other students were nice looking.

"Alright," the professor announced as she walked into the classroom just as the classroom clock showed eight o'clock exactly. "My name is Dr. Carson and I'm the professor for this class. First thing's first. This is Calculus 1001. Anyone not in Calculus 1001 might want to leave and find the right classroom."

When no one moved, she set her textbook down on her desk and pulled out a sheaf of papers stapled together. "When I call your name, please respond so I know you're here. If you have a name you prefer to go by or if I mispronounce your name, let me know. I'll be doing this at the beginning of every class and it will count towards your class participation grade which will factor into your final grade."

There were groans at that but Dr. Carson ignored them. She just held the papers up to her face and began reading off names. Izzy readied herself to respond to her name.

"Isabelle Lightwood," Dr. Carson called, She looked up to both find the person with that name and confirm her pronunciation.

"Just 'Izzy,' please," Izzy said, catching the professor's attention.

Dr. Carson nodded and made the correction in pen on the paper for later reference and continued calling out the other names. Finally, she began handing out the syllabus to the class and explaining the grading scale, homework load, and general class expectations. However, instead of letting the students leave after that, Dr. Carson went straight into teaching the first section of the textbook.

It was then Izzy deeply regretted not buying notebooks before the first day of class. At least she would have a few for tomorrow's classes but until then she would have to do her best to commit what she was seeing and hearing to memory. That wasn't an easy task with math.

When class finally ended, Izzy grabbed her umbrella and walked out of the building and back into the still pouring rain. She had an hour break until her next class at 10:10 and was starving judging by her grumbling stomach. There supposedly was a coffee shop on the first floor of the library and chances were that's where her brother would end up later on. She headed there and sure enough, there was a cafÃ©

with a small patio at the entrance to the library facing the largest green space colloquially named Love Valley in the center of the small campus. The sign on the short overhang said \_Java Script\_, a local chain of coffee shops popular in the area.

Only one person was out on the patio at the moment smoking under the overhang. Everyone else was inside out of the rain. Izzy walked up the four steps to the patio flashing a smile and a quick 'thank you' when the person opened the door for her. It was warm and dry inside the cozy café. She walked up to the counter and ordered a cup of hot coffee and sat down in the booth by the window overlooking the patio and the wet Love Valley close to the café entrance to sip her drink slowly. It was beginning to look like the start of a long, lazy day.

Half an hour later, she picked up her umbrella and half full coffee and started the walk to her next class Back out in the rain. she knew from studying a campus map the day before that the Humanities building was behind the library somewhere, but couldn't remember exactly where.

She still had twenty minutes until class started so she should be able to track down the building by then. If not, it was syllabus day and the first day of add/drop. Missing today wouldn't be a serious problem. The only drawback was that she enjoyed History and actually wanted to go to that class.

She huddled close to her warm coffee under her umbrella as she walked down the sidewalk now bustling with students heading to their morning classes. She was just about to walk onto a large square with patches of grassy knolls and shady trees surrounded by a building on every side when her phone began ringing. So did the phones of at least 15 other students rushing down the sidewalk and the square in the rain around her. She pulled out her phone and checked the caller ID. Not recognizing the number, she silenced the call and slipped it back into her pocket.

"Oh my god!" a girl's voice cried out from behind her.

Izzy turned around to see what the fuss was about when suddenly surrounded by the other students reacting in a similar fashion. Some began crying while others' eyes grew large and they looked around them in fear. Almost all of them began running to the nearest building as fast as they could.

Izzy had only a second to stare at the growing madness in confusion before someone grabbed her arm and forcefully dragged her back into the Humanities building. The unexpected turn and rush of air yanked the umbrella from her hand. People dodged the umbrella and rushed into the Humanities building ahead of Izzy and her companion. They raced into the elevator, stairwells, locked themselves in the many classrooms along the hallways on the first floor, and ducked behind the desks, counters, and bookshelves in the office on the far end of the hallway.

"What's going on?" Izzy gasped. "What's going on?!"

"Shooter near the Union," the student dragging her said in clipped tones, somehow keeping her voice lowered despite the very obvious fear causing it to waver. "The school's on lockdown."

"What?!" Izzy exclaimed.

The student pulling her didn't respond. She simply shook some of her long, copper braids from her face and booked it towards the already packed elevator inside of the main entrance of the building hoping to make it up to the higher floors. But they were forced to stop short when the metal doors closed. The red haired girl smacked the buttons frantically, giving up the next second and heading for the stairwell door on the other side of the hallway. They only made it halfway to the stairwell when Izzy noticed one of the doors along the hallway closing.

"Here!" Izzy commanded, pulling the other student towards the door. She slammed herself bodily against it, pounding on the wood. "Let us in!" she called as loudly as she dared. "We're unarmed."

The door cracked open and a young man with mousy brown hair and alert brown eyes peaked out, giving them a cursory look-over before yanking both girls into the room and turning out the lights. It was only now they were inside that Izzy realized they were stuffed in an office with floor-length windows lining the far wall.

"Oh shit," she muttered.

"We're piling stuff against the door to keep it from opening," the boy who let them in said, closing the door behind them. "Help me."

"Cover that window," a blonde boy with wide amber eyes ordered as he yanked anything he could find in the unlocked cabinets lining the walls and tossed them heedlessly across the floor.

The girl who came in with Izzy was knocked out of the way by the other person in the room, a petite blonde girl with a soft, oval face and big gray eyes. She untangled the blinds string and lowered them as fast as she could.

"One of us has to hold the desk against the door to keep it from opening up," the blonde boy said, tossing his backpack on the floor.

"Move!" Izzy said.

Then she and the girl with braided red hair who came in with her pushed a file cabinet down and laid it parallel to the desk. The guy quickly hopped over the cabinet and knelt down to help the girls brace the file cabinet between the room's walls. The other set of cabinets were finally pushed over by the brunette boy and laid across the base of the window.

"Line your backpacks against the file cabinets," the red haired girl said sharply, ripping off her own heavy bag and slammed it against the cabinet by the window.

Shots rang through the air outside and everyone immediately dropped to the floor between the two file cabinets. "Let's hope this works," the blonde girl said, reaching out to grab anyone's hand.

"Anyone got names?" the boy with brown eyes asked with a crooked

grin. "I'd rather go down knowing that."

"Clary," the red haired girl said. She had chapped lips and simple stud earrings that matched her blue jeans and trendy orange and white striped shirt. "I was supposed to be going to my art class," she murmured, fighting back the urge to sob.

"Don't worry," the blonde guy said in an accented voice. He gave a faint smile, his white teeth flashed in the dim room. A few strands had escaped his gelled hair and hung over fearful eyes. "You'll get there. You'll just be delayed a bit. I'm Jace. I'm on the track team and a sophomore in physics."

"Lydia," the girl with long blonde hair said. She shifted closer to the group, adjusting her position. "I'm in comp sci."

"Izzy," Izzy said. "Hopefully forensics."

"Hope we're not your first assignment," the brown haired boy said. "I'm Simon. Classical studies with a history minor."

"Nice. We're gonna make it through this, guys," Jace said. "We'll be ok. Anyone got a phone?"

Izzy wanted to smack herself for not thinking of that sooner. "Yeah," she said, pulling her phone out of her pocket.

"I got mine," Clary said, pointing to her bedazzled phone tucked securely in her bra and poking out from her shirt. It stood out starkly against her pale skin. "Been recording this since I got the call. I'm not letting this be forgotten."

"You might want to call your parents and tell them you're ok," Simon said.

"Already did," Clary said. "Texted them anyway. My breasts haven't stopped vibrating since," she added wryly. "They keep calling me."

Izzy jerked when she realized she wasn't imagining the vibrations from her own phone. She pulled it out of her pocket and immediately picked up when she recognized her brother's caller ID.

"Izzy, where are you?" Alec's voice demanded urgently.

"Alec," she said. "I'm okay. I'm with some other people. We're in an office in the Humanities building where I have history class."

"That doesn't mean anything to me," Alec snapped. "I need landmarks."

"I..." Izzy hesitated. "I don't know," she admitted. "Where are we?" she whispered.

"On the quad," Simon replied.

"I'm a freshman," Izzy said sharply. "I don't know where that is!"

Shots exploded dangerous close to the window followed by footsteps

coming slowly down the hall inside the building. Izzy instinctively tightened her grip on the phone in her hand. She reached out with her senses like she had spent years learning how to do and searched for the familiar tingle that belonged her brother.

She knew she would regret doing this. Alec had repeatedly warned her not to do this. But she would not let these people die here. Her senses vibrated with a single word. \_Protect!\_

The silence outside the room was heavily making their ears ring.

"Alec," Izzy whispered into the phone speaker when she finally felt his senses latch onto hers. "I need you."

Then there was the sound of gunshots and glass shattering at the same time something crashed against the office door. Izzy heard several people scream, unsure whether or not she was one of them. Jace and Simon leapt up and did their best to cover the girls with their bodies to protect them from the flying glass and bullets.

Izzy slithered out just far enough from under Jace's body so she could stare at the shooter standing just outside the window, a gun aimed at their heads. The office door continued to shake as someone attempted to force their way in from the other side. But Izzy couldn't focus on anything except the shadowy form she that appeared standing directly in front of the shooter.

Strangely, she wasn't afraid anymore.

Thunder rumbled in the distance and the shooter raised his gun to his head, guided by the shadow's glowing hand, and fired. Izzy never saw the wound or the shooter's undoubtedly confused face. All she saw was the shooter's finger pull the trigger, blood spray from the other side of his head, and the body fall to the ground. The shadow turned around and gazed at her with golden cat eyes.

The spell was broken when the person on the other side of the office door pounded it again forcing the desk and file cabinet bracing it shut to jerk back an inch or so, knocking Izzy and subsequently Jace to the floor. When she lifted her head again, the shadow was gone. There was a scuffle in the hallway followed by a single gunshot then silence. For some reason, Isabelle knew had no reason to worry anymore. The silence from the hallway was confirmation of that.

It was over.

There was no more shooting, no more screaming, no more running, just the rain and heavy breathing.

Izzy stayed in the room with Jace, Simon, Clary, and Lydia until a policeman arrived and confirmed what she already knew, the two suspects were dead. The group stuck together, unwilling to let each other out of their sight. That one chance encounter in a small office had forced them to bond in a way they never would have before.

It was strange thinking this as policemen helped scared and stumbling students out of their hiding places and to safety while EMTs rushed to and fro helping the wounded. A coroner was carting away another body bag and people were crying and hugging and calling their parents

and searching for their friends.

Izzy sat on the bumper of an ambulance under a temporary tent with many other students soaking wet from the rain and wrapped in a blanket. Jace sat next to her while Clary, Simon, and Lydia sat on chairs in front of her. They kept glancing at each other with haunted eyes, seeking confirmation that what they had just experienced had been real and not a nightmare.

"You were right," Simon said without preamble, pulling his blanket tighter around his shoulders.

"Who?" Clary asked absently.

"Jace," Simon answered, lifting his head to the blonde boy. "We did get out."

Jace huffed a laugh, too high strung for a more convincing response.

"Izzy."

Izzy looked up and was not surprised to see Alec standing behind Lydia watching her. His eyes danced across her body searching for any sign of injury. Sitting on the ambulance, she was actually eye level with him. Alec stepped around Lydia ignoring her startled cry and gathered his little sister in a tight hug, tucking his face in her shoulder.

Izzy hugged him back as best she could hampered as she was by her blanket and his arms. "Thank you," she murmured in his ear. He said nothing, just held her closer.

Neither of them were aware of the pair of unsettling golden eyes watching them from the shadows. The man said nothing, he simply watched. He had barely managed to get a warning to the police before the attack began. Had he delayed any longer than he had, his new object of interest would have been devastated.

It was so rare in this day and age for a Mundane to have the Sight, let alone two. It must have something to do with those breathtaking blue eyes. Just the sight of them had his stomach doing things it had no right to. He knew that from this moment, his casual interest in the Mundane would have to take a more serious turn. Who knows, maybe he could see those lovely eyes again. He certainly hoped he would.

## 2. Aftermath

**\*\*A/N:\*\*** Slightly shorter than I prefer but... It'll do for now. By the way, since Alaric's character doesn't have an official last name that I know of, I'm using his actor's last name "Labelle." Just FYI.

**\*\*Chapter summary:\*\*** In which the cops show up and don't like what they see and Isabelle lost her umbrella.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>2: Aftermath<strong>

When he arrived at the scene, he was struck by the crowd of stunned, crying, and confused faces. No matter how many times he saw scenes like this, especially ones with children, the eyes were what Detective Luke Garroway always remembered. They weren't young eyes anymore. They were old, aged by tragedy and horror.

"What was the final count?" he asked as he opened up his umbrella.

"Four dead including not the two shooters and eleven injured, three seriously," Detective Alaric Labelle replied, falling into step beside his partner under the cover of the umbrella. "No one saw it coming. The good news is, it could've been a lot worse."

"I suppose that is good news," Luke said. He watched a couple by an ambulance embrace and sighed. "This was not what I wanted to deal with today," he muttered.

"You and everyone else here," Alaric said. "We're still getting statements from the students that are willing to talk." He shook his head as he looked around. "I'm thinking classes will probably be cancelled for the rest of the day."

"I wouldn't be surprised."

Alaric studied his partner closely and sighed inwardly. "You know-" he began.

"Don't," Luke said curtly, cutting him off. "Please, just don't." He rolled his shoulders, preparing himself for the inevitable. "Let's get this over with as quickly as possible."

Alaric followed his partner up to the nearest ten filled with anxious students. The blonde boy noticed them approach first and slid off the ambulance bumper. The girl sitting next to him did not acknowledge them. Instead, she tucked her face in the shoulder of the boy hugging her. Alaric chose to let them have their time. It would take a while to get everyone's statements anyway. They could afford to wait a bit. Instead, he turned his attention to the blonde student.

"Hey," the young man said with a weak attempt at a smile.

"Hey," Luke said to the group. "I'm Detective Garroway and this is Detective Labelle from NYPD," he said, pulling out his badge to show the group.

"Jace Wayland," the young man said. "We were all in the same room when the shooters killed themselves."

"I see," Luke said sympathetically. "I'm sorry to ask this now, but we need to know what happened. Did any of you know the shooters?" he asked, turning to the group.

"I didn't even see their faces," the brunette boy in the group said pushing his wet glasses up his nose self-consciously. "I transferred here a year ago so I mean," he shrugged. "I don't really know. I'm Simon by the way," he said, offering his hand.

"Simon," Alaric repeated. "Can I have your last name? Just for the record."

Simon flushed awkwardly. "Yeah," he admitted. "Simon Lewis."

"I'm Lydia Branwell," Lydia said to the policemen. "That's Clary," she said nodding to the red haired girl sitting on the opposite side of Simon, "and that's Izzy," she said nodding to the girl being held by the last person in the group.

"Clary Fray," Clary said, smiling at the detectives. "Nice to meet you." Several long strands of hair tumbled over her shoulder as she reached down into her shirt and pulled out her cellphone. Alaric had the grace to blush and look away awkwardly. "I never actually saw the guys," Clary continued, unaware of the affects her actions had, "but I had my phone recording after I got the alert."

"You mean from the school?" Luke asked, his brows lifting when he saw the cellphone.

"Yeah," Clary said. "Lots of us got the call all at about the same time. I texted my parents immediately afterwards and then turned on my camera."

"Do you mind if I see it?" Luke asked holding out his hand for the phone.

"Yeah. I can text it to you if you want," Clary offered.

"That'd be great," Luke said, pulling his own phone.

The girl named Izzy slid off the ambulance bumper, wrapped a blanket-covered arm around the shoulder of the young man holding her, and began walking out from under the tent.

"Excuse me," Alaric said, stepping around his partner to catch the couple before they left. "Sorry, just a couple quick questions," he said when he caught up to them. "Clary said your name was Izzy, correct?"

The girl nodded, her longish brown-black hair sticking wetly to her face. "Yeah," she said.

"That short for anything?" he asked.

She nodded, pushing a wet clump of hair behind her ear. "Isabelle. This is my brother Alec."

Alaric glanced up to the young man next to the girl and nodded. "Nice to meet you," he said. "Could I have your last name, please? Just for the record."

"Lightwood," Alec answered.

"Were either of you in the room when the shooters killed themselves?" Alaric asked.

Alec didn't respond verbally but he did nod, his wet black fringe swaying slight against his forehead. But he avoided the detective's eyes in favor of gazing worriedly at his sister.

"I was," Isabelle said. "He wasn't," she added, pointing to her brother. "Clary grabbed me and pulled me into the building when she got the call."

"You didn't get the call?" Alaric asked curiously.

"I did, I just didn't pick up 'cause I didn't recognize the number," Isabelle said with a shrug.

Alaric nodded. "I get it," he said, nodding in understanding. "How do you all know each other?" he asked, pulling out his notepad to take notes.

"We don't," Isabelle said. "We just ended up in the same room together." She huffed a laugh. "We'll probably be friends after this though."

"I know what you mean," Alaric agreed with a smile before turning to the brother. "Where were you when this happened?"

"Why?" Alec demanded suspiciously, his blue eyes suddenly boring into the detective's.

"I'm just trying to establish locations in case anything happened that you may have heard or seen," the detective said, raising his hands in a no-offense gesture. "I'm not accusing you of anything."

Alec's posture relaxed minutely and nodded. "I was at the Starbucks by campus," he said.

The detective nodded. "Right," he murmured, glancing over his shoulder to his partner. "Okay, well give us a call if you think of anything that might be useful, yeah? Stay safe."

With a last sympathetic smile, Alaric turned and walked back to Luke who had stepped away from the group of kids while still staying under the tent. Luke glanced at him briefly acknowledging his presence before returning his gaze to his phone. He shook his head with a heavy sigh.

"This isn't what I signed up for," he said. "The jealous wife, the disgruntled husband, the occasional O.D., the car crashes... \_That's\_ what I signed up for." He slipped her phone back into his pocket and crossed her arms. "Not this. This..."

"Yeah," Alaric said. "I know." He shifted his feet and looked around at the faces of the haunted children. They may be adults in the eyes of the law, but they were still children in his eyes. They probably always would be. "Look, I'll talk to the rest of the kids and see what I can get. Why don't you go call headquarters, let 'em know what we have so far, then we'll try to talk to the others. We can go get a drink after this. What do you say?"

Luke huffed in frustration but nodded nonetheless. What he needed was a cup of fresh hot coffee. "Fine," he conceded reluctantly. "I'll grab you one too. Two sugars and a cream, right?"

Toby nodded and watched his partner retreat to the police car for a

moment before shaking his head. Detective Luke Garroway was not handling this as well as Alaric had hoped. He was relatively new to this NYPD precinct but had quickly built up a reputation for being a dedicated and hard-working cop. He had a level head on his shoulders and if he had one weakness, it was children. Alaric could not find fault with that.

Seeing children caught up in the dark, gritty world called reality was not something any policeman enjoyed. Watching the light of innocence drain from a child's eyes as they're told they mom, dad, sibling, or friend would never wake up again was one of the most painful things he ever had to do. He would take responsibility for calling the victims' families to inform of the loss from this latest travesty.

A school shooting in New York City of all places. They were smack dab in the middle of downtown New York. The college was good, true, but nowhere near as prestigious as the larger, big name universities like the New York University or the Columbia University. Most students transferred out to those other schools if they could.

Why would anyone be insane enough to take a weapon to their small college and gun down innocent children? Young adults the students may be, but Alaric would always see them as children. Their stupefied expressions would stay with him for years. They always did.

He could only imagine what Luke was feeling right now. He had seen the numb expression on his partner's face as he observed the scene. It had clearly brought up memories the man preferred buried. It probably had something to do with whatever case had forced him to pack up from the previous precinct he'd worked at and move to this quieter community north of Central Park. Alaric knew it had involved kids but nothing else. He knew better than to pry. Every cop had that one case that would always haunt them just like this even would always haunt these kids.

Heaving a sigh, he stuffed his hands in his pockets, tucking his notepad away so it didn't get wet and walked over to another tent with students huddled under it. He wanted to get as many preliminary statements as he could before his potential witnesses left. It was not a nice part of the job, but it was necessary. Already, parents were arriving to whisk their children away. He hoped they could all rest well tonight, but he highly doubted it.

Alec watched the detective leave to speak with his partner and thus was the first to notice Simon walk over to him. Isabelle turned in his arms curiously when she noticed Alec was not planning on leaving just yet. She offered Simon a wane smile when she saw him approach.

"Hey," Simon offered to both of them. "Look," he said, absently tugging the blanket over his shoulders closer, "the four of us're probably going to this place just off campus. I know the owner. He makes a killer cappuccinoâ€¦" He flushed and ducked his head. "Bad choice of words, sorry," he said quickly. "I'm really not good at this sort of thing, but I was wondering if y'all wanted to come with us. You up for it?"

Izzy could feel Alec's reluctance through their contact and while she did want to get away from campus and this whole debacle as fast as

she could, she was not quite ready to leave the people she had weathered it with yet. However, she knew if she did not speak up, Alec would quickly put a stop to this. So she did the one thing she knew always worked: she gave her big brother her best kicked puppy eyes.

Alec, who had been just about to voice his refusal, caught his sister's eyes and stiffened. "Izzy," he warned.

"Alec," she said in the same tone. "Please?"

An interesting set of emotions flickered through his eyes before settling on defeat. His shoulders drooped as he nodded. "Fine," he said. "Where is it?"

"Oh, you're coming too?" Simon asked. He hurriedly corrected himself at the icy gleam in Alec's eyes. "Right, right, yeah, duh, 'course you're comin' too." He cleared his throat awkwardly. "It's up the road a ways. Just a block from campus down the road."

"Sure," Isabelle said. "But, um, what about your parents?"

Simon smiled and shrugged. "This place is a local joint," he said. "Everybody hangs out there some time or another. I'd be surprised if I didn't see a lot of students and families there after this."

Alec hummed. "We'll be there."

"Good," Simon said, smiling in relief. "I kind of need the backup to deal with my family, if you know what I mean." He turned to head back to the others before jolting and whirling around. "Oh yeah! The place is called \_The Nest\_."

"\_The Nest\_," Alec repeated incredulously.

Simon flushed. "Yeah," he said chuckling. "We got a lot of weird names for stuff but they're cool so no worries. See you there, 'kay?"

Alec rolled his eyes and walked off, dragging Isabelle with him.

"You could have said goodbye," Izzy scolded gently.

"So could you," Alec replied.

"I'm not the one being all tall, dark, and gloomy," Izzy fired back.

"I have good reason to be," Alec said coldly.

The fight drained out of her and she visibly wilted under his glare. Even not aimed directly at her, Alec had a very distinct and intimidating glare. It reminded her of the fury of a vicious thunderstorm.

"Humans; filthy, disgusting creatures," Alec hissed.

Isabelle sighed. She knew people could be cruel, but there were many who were kind as well. Clary could just as easily have left her

standing in the middle of the quad clueless and helplessly flailing about, but she didn't. Jace, Lydia, and Simon could just have as easily have locked Izzy and Clary out in the hallway, but they didn't. Jace and Simon could just as easily have dropped to the floor in an every man for themselves manner, but they didn't. They covered Izzy, Lydia, and Clary with their own bodies knowing they would probably die but they did it anyway.

Somewhere along the line, Alec had lost his faith in humanity.

Isabelle was willing to bet she knew the exact moment when that happened.

"You do realize you're a human, too," she could not help but add in their age old argument.

As usual, Alec's reply was a noncommittal huff.

Unfortunately, the humor of the moment faded just as quickly as it came. The combination of the early morning, the cold rain, and the trying day were beginning to wear on her mood. Thus why it wasn't until they finally reached their truck parked nearby campus did Isabelle realize something that could have been useful a few minutes ago.

"Oh!" she gasped. "I lost the umbrella."

End  
file.